

## Thoughts for the week – 9<sup>th</sup> August

Read Acts 9: 32-43 – Peter, Aeneas and Tabitha

### Everyday building the Kingdom of Jesus

V.32

Peter was going about his everyday life but clearly integral to this was the leading of the Holy Spirit and the building up/encouragement of the Saints

There were Saints (literally - holy ones) who because of persecution had dispersed – these were likely to be predominantly Christian's of Jewish origin because of Peter's involvement

The implications here is that these are good, Godly people

V.33

Aeneas was a disabled man confined to his bed for 8 years.

- We're meant to relate to this guy in his trouble. Whether it be that we ourselves have a difficulty or disability or whether we know someone else who does.

V.34

Aeneas is experiencing the realities of everyday life – bitter, sweet, mundane

We don't know if Aeneas is a believer or not – it doesn't seem to matter to Luke – Peter sees that he is in need and understands that it is part of who is in Christ to help him

The healing that Peter is involved in is in Jesus' name – the emphasis is not on Peter – although his involvement is recognised – but on Jesus' sovereign work to bring healing and restoration.

- When we see a need we come as those who are in Christ to bring what we can.

V.35

There is impact in the wider community from this healing. The healing draws people locally to Jesus.

- The testimony of the work of Jesus in our lives is powerful and impactful

V.36

We're now in Joppa about 35 miles from Jerusalem

We're introduced to Tabitha or Dorcus – a believer, a good woman who served the poor and was obviously someone with a great character and reputation.

- We're meant to want to be like Tabitha

The story is presented to us in a similar manner to Jesus' miracle stories.

- We're meant to understand that because of the Holy Spirit followers of Jesus are called to be involved in the same kind of ministry as Jesus, Peter & Tabitha. A full picture of the Kingdom of Jesus is being presented to us in this story.
  - Life in the Kingdom of Jesus involves
  - Prayer
  - Involvement in healing
  - Caring for the poor
  - Growing in Godly character
    - *"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them" Ezek 36:26-7*
    - *... Be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and . . . put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:22-24,*

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- Not many of us will be involved in raising the dead but we're to understand that it's possible ... indeed that praying for healing, serving the poor and being of good character are what it takes to build the Kingdom of Jesus.
- We're also meant to understand that resurrection to life is at the heart of the Kingdom of Jesus.
- We're meant to understand that this life to which we're called is a life of prayer ... a life spent in communion with God ... in the posture of prayer we become available to be used by the Lord to build his Kingdom
- We're meant to understand that this resurrection is intended to bring others to life .. as we are told it does.

#### V.43

- Luke includes this small detail of where Peter stayed.
  - In the home of a tanner ... an unclean trade because they were dealing with dead animals & products
  - Someone part of or connected to the Christian community though – so not excluded because of who they were or what they did
- Given the role of providing hospitality for an important guest
  - We're not told that Peter objected but he was probably very challenged !... but in the very next chapter Peter has a dream about his attitudes towards that which is clean and unclean ...
- We're all in need of teaching, conforming ... even apostles such as Peter! Do we remain open and teachable?